A Profile Of The Amazing Randi

By VennerRoad, 4th Nov 2014

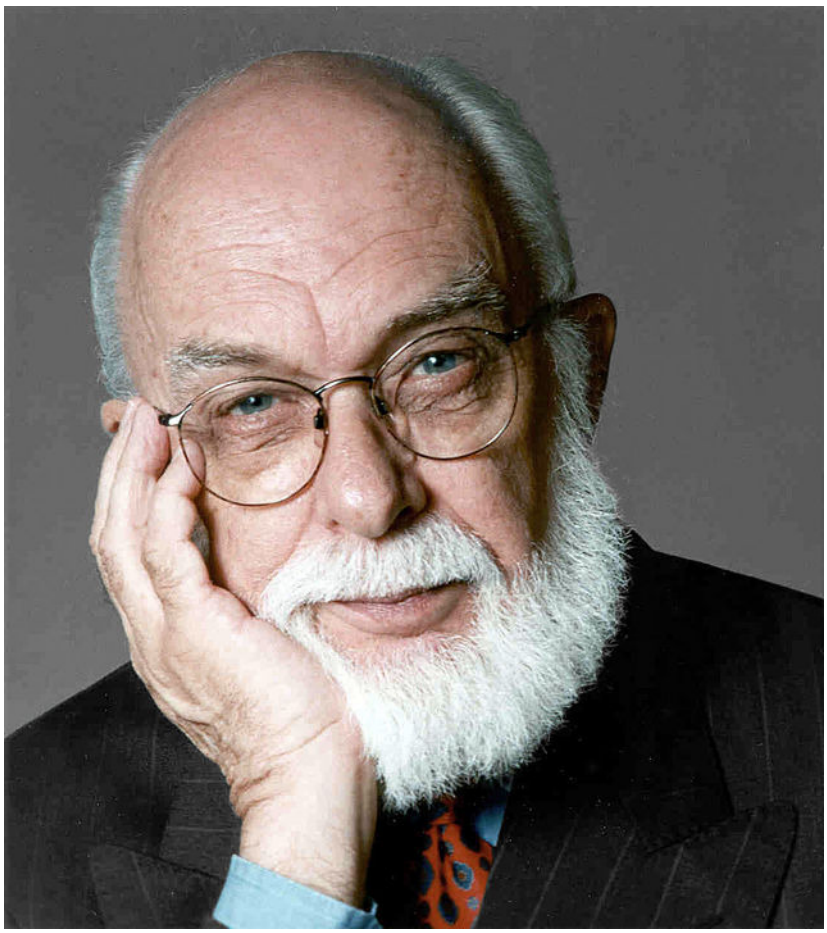
A warts and all look at the greatest psychic debunker of our age.

If you haven't heard of James Randi, take a gander at the new BBC documentary *Exposed: Magicians, Psychics And Frauds* in its *Storyville* series. If you are outside the UK and can't watch it for any reason, there is plenty of footage of the man on YouTube, and of course he has his own website.

Randi ran away at 17 to join the circus having been inspired by a magician. He went on to become both a magician and an escapologist working with among others Alice Cooper. Then, in later life, instead of retiring he took up another career, exposing and debunking psychic charlatans, con men and spirit mediums. He has toured the world sharing his knowledge with disparate audiencies, and has also written a number of books including *The Truth About Uri Geller* (originally *The Magic Of Uri Geller*). Geller is probably the biggest fish he has exposed, but the cruellest is Peter Popoff; both men are given space in this documentary in the name of fairness, not that Popoff especially understands the meaning of fairness. Included is footage of Popoff's performance with some additional commentary by his wife, commentary that was picked up by a specialist Randi had brought in to a packed meeting, and later broadcast for the whole world to hear and see.

Although Popoff went bankrupt shortly after this, there is no persuading the true believers they have been conned; at times that can include even scientists – for those who deign to call parapsychologists scientists.

If you take one thing only from this documentary it should be Randi's claim that no matter who you are or how smart you are, you can be fooled. That includes the man himself, but best not to talk about his personal life here, even though it was discussed frankly and at times heatedly by the man himself.



Psychic debunker James Randi

Also appearing in this documentary are Randi fellow travellers and – in archive footage of course – the late Johnny Carson. This is a unique film of a man who has won numerous awards, the most distant if not the highest by several million miles is having an asteroid named after him.

To My Obituary Of James Randi